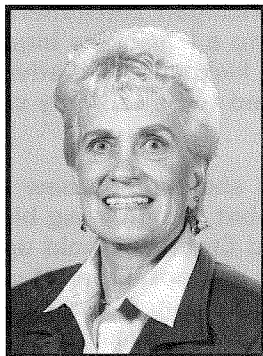


Hammerstrom's

for the people
in the 17th Senate District

Hotline



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NATIONAL FLAG DAY In 1777, the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes pattern for our nation's flag. The pattern consisted of 13 alternate red and white stripes and 13 white stars, representing the 13 colonies that had declared their independence in 1776. After Vermont and Kentucky entered the Union, Congress adopted a new flag in 1795 which included two more stripes and stars. As more states joined the Union, it became apparent that adding one stripe for each new state would destroy the shape of the flag. As a result, Congress in 1818 restored the original design of 13 stripes and provided that each state be represented by one star. In 1949, Congress passed and President Truman signed a bill which designated June 14 of each year as National Flag Day.

DID YOU KNOW? The idea of an annual day specifically celebrating the flag is believed to have first originated in 1885. BJ Cigrand, a Wisconsin teacher, arranged for his students to observe June 14 as "Flag Birthday" to commemorate the anniversary of the adoption of the flag.

CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION AWAITS GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE The Michigan Legislature recently passed a bill that would crack down on scam artists who prey on senior citizens and other vulnerable citizens. Under current state law, a person can be prosecuted for using a false pretense to commit a crime, but not if the pretense involves a future act. Senate Bill 1009 was introduced to revise the statute and now allows prosecutors to charge a person with a crime for having the "intent" to defraud or cheat another person. For example, a con artist who offers to do work on someone's home in exchange for a small down payment and then never shows up to complete the work could possibly face criminal charges for having the intent to collect the money without following through on the work promised. Senate Bill 1009, which received strong bipartisan support and passed unanimously in both chambers of the Legislature, now awaits the Governor's approval.

LEGISLATION COULD HELP REDUCE DRUG COSTS Consumers may soon have another way to help reduce their drug costs. After a Michigan consumer was denied a \$10 rebate from a pharmaceutical company based on interpretation of current state law, legislators introduced bills that would allow Michigan consumers to receive direct rebates or discounts from drug manufacturers or distributors. In response to a legislative inquiry, Attorney General Cox determined that such rebates or discounts could be seen as illegal kickbacks and advised lawmakers to change and clarify the statutes governing such rebates. Michigan is believed to be the only state that makes direct drug-manufacturer rebates and discounts illegal.

MICHIGAN RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO GIVE BLOOD The Michigan Red Cross is encouraging new and repeat donors to give blood once or twice throughout the summer season. To help combat the growing blood shortage, and prepare for an increase in demand due to travel-related accidents, the Red Cross will hold up to 20 blood drives a day throughout the state each week. The donor campaign will culminate on September 11 with the biggest single-day blood drive in the state at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn. Blood donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in good general health. The process of giving blood takes approximately an hour and can help save up to three lives. For more information about blood drives in your area, please visit the Red Cross's website at www.redcross.org, or call, toll-free, 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

If you would like to receive future issues of Hammerstrom's Hotline via e-mail,
please contact me at SenBHammerstrom@senate.michigan.gov